

Happy Holidays!



Confessions of a New Parent.

See back page.



JODY BERKE

Serving the neighborhoods from Fruitvale Avenue to Seminary Avenue and from Foothill Boulevard to Warren Freeway

Volume 11 Number 10

December 1999/January 2000



LUDWIGMAN

Fairyland's Sarah Uttermann.

Sarah in Fairyland

BY TRISH WEST

"Please excuse our magic dust during renovation," read the sign at the entrance to Children's Fairyland. Autumn leaves swirled in the November air as I hurried to this special corner of Lake Merritt Park. Inside the park's entrance, a uniformed doorperson in the emerald-green of the City of Oz greeted me. From beneath her towering chapeau flowed waist-length wavy blonde hair. Her angelic appearance was tempered by an au courant pair of wire-rim spectacles and a mischievous grin. Twelve-year-old Sarah Uttermann led me to Fairyland's office, and, together with Executive Director Nancy Stark, we settled in for a chat about Sarah's three-year stint as one of the park's Personalities.

Metro: When did you first come to Fairyland, Sarah?

Sarah: I guess I was about two years old. From that time, I most remember the shoe where the Old Woman lives. It's just the right size for really little kids. I was delighted to find something that was for me, not for big adults. I started theater training when I was five. And then, when I was eight, I auditioned and became a Fairyland Personality. The Personalities are a group of 30 kids 8 to 10 years old who perform at Fairyland.

Metro: Is performing here different from your other theater experience?

Sarah: It's much more relaxed. *continued on page 2*

Landlord Pays for Neglect

BY PETER BOND

Landlords are obliged to maintain their properties. The law can and will penalize them for neglect. Ten Laurel District families on Maybelle proved this. Their lives had been burdened by blighted rental property occupied by troublesome tenants. They found their solution in Oakland's Blight Ordinance and the Small Claims Court strategy pioneered by Safe Streets Now!

As reported in the March 1998 *Metro* article by Peter

Bond, the neighbors, assisted by Community Policing Officer Kevin Reed and Neighborhood Services officer Renee Sykes, tried the friendly approach but found that only the threat of a hefty fine forced the absentee landlord to evict troublesome tenants.

The property remained blighted however, so the ten immediate neighbors put in a claim asking for \$5000 each. The court ruled that the parties should meet with an arbitrator first, then return for a final ruling. During this period, the landlord made

substantial improvements and put the property up for sale.

Although the problems were abated, the valiant ten went back to court seeking a ruling that would inform other communities about how to penalize neglectful landlords. The decision was in their favor. The blighted property was found to have caused approximately \$20,000 in damages to those who brought suit, and the landlord was ordered to pay that sum.

Speaking for his group, Peter Bond concluded, "We now know that there are ordinances in Oakland that can prod owners into action. We *continued on page 5*



PETER BOND

Neighbors win settlement: (L-R) Inge Engel, Evelyn Kirby, Bobbie Bond, Margie Bailey, Peter Bond, Dan Kirby.

Enjoy your holidays.
The Metro returns February 1.



PETER BOND

Third graders at Laurel School perform "multiplication dance" as part of the Laurel Jazz Festival.

The Laurel Jazz Festival Is Born

BY ADINA SARA

While Stella Lamb of Patterson Avenue, with the help of all her neighbors, was engineering the planting of two hundred City of Oakland trees to beautify her Laurel School neighborhood, she met neighbor Haybert Houston of California Street, publisher of *Jazz Now* magazine. Thence

sprang the vision of a jazz festival at the Laurel School to raise money for landscaping and play structures where asphalt and chain-link fences now blight the area.

A magical series of connections led Stella from Julien Bond, pianist at nearby Cornerstone Baptist Church, to the Berkeley High School Jazz Ensemble.

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You, too, can become a friend of the Metro. See page 2.

Fairyland

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Anything goes here, so we can try out new things and improvise. The show is a little different every time we put it on. We can write new songs and add new lines. That keeps it fun for the performers.

Metro: One of the 1999 plays was *Wizard of Oz*. What was your part?

Sarah: I was an MC, which is a job for Personality graduates. I worked the sound system, cued the music, helped the director, and was an understudy for all the roles. Because the sound system is kind of temperamental, I got to use my favorite phrase a lot: "We're having tech-ni-cal difficulties."

Metro: Were there other kinds of difficulties as well?

Sarah: The funniest was when Glinda the Good Witch was singing the closing song. A little boy in the front row must have really liked the Cowardly Lion, because he kept growling all through the song. Roarrrr! His sister was embarrassed and put her hand over his mouth. So he did as any real lion would do—he bit her! On stage, we were laughing so hard.

Metro: What role has been your favorite?

Sarah: My first year, I was a pig in a Chinese fairytale. That's my favorite animal. No one else seems to like them, so I say, hey, stand up for the unpopular animals!

Metro: I guess it's inevitable that Fairyland gets compared to Disneyland. How do you rate the two parks?

Sarah: Disneyland is much more commercial. You're constantly encouraged to buy, buy, buy. Fairyland is smaller and friendlier. I think it's more attuned to the needs of little kids, who might get scared by some six-foot-tall talking mouse. At Fairyland, the Personalities don't wear masks, and we're not that much older than the children who visit. The rides are smaller and gentler, just right for little kids.

Metro: Has Fairyland been an



"Come to Fairyland".

important source of friends for you?

Sarah: I've known some kids here for years—like Charlie O'Malley, who played the Scarecrow in Oz. He always says that some day he'll take Nancy's job as park director, and everyone believes that he will!

Metro: Does Fairyland have a place in your growing-up plans?

Sarah: I'd like to get my work permit when I'm fourteen and work here, just like puppeteer Frank Oz did a long time ago. Of course, there are all sorts of other things that I like to do—drawing, acting, playing the piano, singing, using the computer. Maybe someday I'll be an author/actress/marine biologist/zoologist.

Metro: Do your school activities include performing arts?

Sarah: I attend Redwood Day School, which has extracurricular music classes three mornings a week. I play piano in the jazz band and sing in a chorus.

(Although Sarah was reluctant to tell me, her mom, Anne, proudly revealed that her daughter had recently received the school's Will Gold Award for Creativity and a Passion for Learning.)

Metro: What else do you like about school?

Sarah: I love to read, read, read! I prefer fantasy stuff to slice-of-life stories. One of my favorites is *The Chronicles of Narnia*, which I read before I went to kindergarten. All the kids in kindergarten knew me as "the girl who could read chapter books." I also loved *Lord of the Rings*.

Friends of Sausal Creek

BY ANNE HAYES

City Public Works and County Office of Education Grow More Green

In the San Leandro hills near the Oakland border lies the Wilmont Sweeney Education Center, a high school run by the Alameda County Office of Education for first-time juvenile offenders. One of the center's amenities is a greenhouse, which had fallen into disuse. Last spring, city and county staff developed a plan to renovate the greenhouse and use it and a nearby lath house to grow riparian (creekside) plants using the labor and care of Wilmont Sweeney students. Oakland's Watershed Improvement Program, administered by the city Public Works Agency, has an ongoing need for riparian plants for volunteer groups such as the Friends of Sausal Creek that are carrying out restoration projects with the city's support. Greenhouse repairs were started this summer, and plant production has already begun.

The collaboration is win-win-win: students gain marketable greenhouse skills and participate in a hands-on environmental education program with a local focus. Also, the County's greenhouse is used for its intended purpose, and the City gets hard-to-find riparian plants at a reduced cost. The Sausal Creek Watershed benefits too, as volunteers, students, and city and county staff collaborate to collect seeds, take cuttings, and grow hundreds of plants that will eventually be returned to the watershed to help restore native plant communities.

For more information about the Wilmont Sweeney program, call Jennifer Stanley, City of Oakland Environmental Projects Specialist, at 238-6889. To join the Friends, come to the next monthly meeting, on Wednesday, December 15, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Dimond Library, or join our next workday, on Saturday, December 18, from 9 a.m. to noon at Dimond Park. For more information about the Friends, call Anne Hayes at 231-9566. ♦

Metro: And how about the Harry Potter books?

Sarah: Everyone has read them. They're not just some little "quiet" books that only a few people like. I think that people who feel the books are supporting the occult are a little bit crazy. If Harry Potter books get kids reading, yeah, go for it!

Metro: Do you think some day you'll bring your own children to Fairyland?

Sarah: Yes. I think Fairyland will be even better then but still

the same in the important ways. I don't know quite how to describe it, but it has kind of a heavenly aura. I guess you can tell that I like that word!

Metro: Do you have any last words for *Metro* readers?

Sarah: Yes! Come to Fairyland!

Meet Sarah and the other Personalities on weekends year-round. Auditions for prospective Personalities, children 8-10, will be held in January 22 and 23. Call Chrissie Hoffman, 238-6878 #3, for more information. ♦

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Leona Heights Neighborhood News

BY GORDON LAVERTY

At a recent dinner meeting at Leona Lodge, the Leona Heights Improvement Association charted a course looking ahead to Y2K. Strengthening the home alert program, cooperation with the local drainage program of the Coalition of Hill Area Home Owners and City of Oakland Public Works Department, the welcoming and education of new residents, and participation in local issues will continue.

We will continue supporting a development of the Leona Heights area that is sensitive to the historic background and natural attributes

of the neighborhood. The recent application for three-lot subdivision of the old Joe and Nina Stern property is moving along with apparent appreciation of local residents' interest in the history of that property.

Home alert "cell" leaders are still being sought. Those interested should call 531-4860.

Improvement of the dangerous traffic situation at the intersection of Mountain Boulevard and Rusting Street is being discussed with CalTrans and city traffic department officials. Speed along Mountain Boulevard is excessive as drivers speed up to enter the westbound I-580 onramp. ♦

Redwood Heights Neighborhood News

BY GINGER REDING

As secretary of the Improvement Association, I must say I've had some very positive dealings with certain city departments: Park and Rec, when working on Avenue Terrace Park; and recently, the Police and Fire departments, when working on our annual meeting. However, the issue of secondary units is bringing out what still needs to be fixed in the area of "customer service."

Our neighborhood has been dealing with a home on Virden Ave. for 10 years. There is a running police record on this home. It has been divided into three separate living areas, with three different tenants, none of them the owner. Currently, there are two tenants. Aside from the illegal tenant situation, the home has been deemed unsafe and not up to code. The owner was supposed to remove the extra kitchen units, and her own words to me were that she "was not going to do anything."

A letter dated May 26, from Justin Horner, Community Services Coordinator, explains that code compliance is aware of the property and keeping close tabs on it. Because of the owner's inaction, the city can go forward with other action, including demolition.

When we spoke to Clark Gertner of code compliance in June and July, we were taken aback. He was not following through on the actions on the property. He said, "Do you want me to go after all of the illegal units in the area? There are more in Montclair too." He would not answer any questions about what should or could be done. I finally established some time line to follow up but have heard nothing.

As the many articles on this subject are pointing out, it's hard to accept more lenient policies on secondary units when enforcement is so lax. Adding more staff would help, but the current staff needs to shape up. No matter what happens with the changes, fixing the current problems would go a long way towards improving Oakland neighborhoods. ♦

Dimond Improvement Association News

BY KAREN MARIE SCHROEDER

Our meeting on November 3 began with the announcement by Niccolo DeLuca that the Dimond Safeway's lease expires on June 30. A number of neighborhood people depend on Safeway and hope that we can encourage them to remain. Other people in the neighborhood want Safeway to renovate and present a wider

selection of produce and delicatessen items. We also learned that the present tot lot in the recreation center at Dimond Park will be undergoing an ADA upgrade and that funding is possible.

Councilmember-at-large Henry Chang spoke to the group about attracting businesses to Oakland and our own Dimond area. If stores that are already in

continued on page 7

High Street Neighborhood News

BY ADELLE FOLEY

NCPC Election Results

Congratulations to the newly elected officers of the Melrose/High Hopes NCPC: Chair Bill Ashley; Vice Chair, Preston Turner; Secretary, Brenda Cooper; Membership Coordinator, Chris Ralls; and Treasurer, La Verne Kuess. The next meeting will be at 7 p.m. Thursday, January 20, at Horace Mann Elementary School, Ygnacio and Congress.

Neighborhood Lifeline

The little bus that makes its rounds from Mills or Leona Heights to BART (and back again) plays an important part in the life of the neighborhood. Many mornings, it's standing room only on the way to BART. The passengers come in all sizes—a baby with the endearing tendency to hold on to a handy finger; a little girl who thanks

the driver without being prompted. School kids move their backpacks when someone needs the seat. A passenger loans her copy of the *Tribune* funnies to a middle-school kid for the duration of the ride. It's a crucial connection with the outside world—on a daily basis, or when a car is out of service.

Seven Days a Week

Since mid-October, service on the 48 Line—from Leona Heights down High Street to Fruitvale BART—has become available on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. The heroines of this story are our neighbors, Frances Nappo and Edna Barner, who circulated a petition and wrote to AC Transit, cheered on by the High Street Neighborhood Alliance. So spread the word and hop on the bus. It runs every half hour from dawn to dusk.

Disclosure: In the interest of truth in reporting, I'll

admit that my day job is at AC Transit. But I turn into pure customer as soon as I approach the bus stop.

And to Think That I Saw it on East 14th Street

A few blocks from High Street, I discovered "Think Modern," tangible evidence of Oakland's restoration of landmark buildings. It's worth a visit to 4820 International Blvd. just to see the beautiful façade. Inside Think Modern, Meyer Shacter will show you furniture and furnishings from the '40s through the '60s, talk about the art on his high walls, and tell you about his positive experience working with CEDA. This new, one-man retail operation is generally open weekday afternoons, but Shacter honors requests for appointments at other times. Try his store phone (532-1213) or his cell phone (919-7300). ♦

Laurel Community Action Project News

BY ADINA SARA

L-CAP officers for the year 2000 were elected at the October meeting. David Finacom is the new Chair, Elizabeth Callaway is Co-Chair Volunteer Coordinator, Sandra Weese and Jacqueline Palacios will share the Co-Chair position of Outreach Coordinator, Demetrius Leal is Treasurer, and Andrea Leal is Secretary. Four of the six new officers are relative newcomers to L-CAP—a sign that this organization is not only growing new members but new leadership as well.

A new subcommittee—bringing the energies of NCPC and L-CAP together—

has volunteered to research possibilities of finding open spaces in the Laurel suitable for a park and playground. The Maybelle/Masterson corner, adjacent to Kragen's Auto Parts, has been a prime focus and starting point for this project. Anyone interested in joining this subcommittee should contact the L-CAP number (986-9021) and leave your name and number.

No news may or may not be good news for the important corners at 35th and MacArthur and High Street and MacArthur. Until we hear differently, we are anticipating the development on these corners to go as planned—Ladyfingers and Mail Boxes Etc. at the corner of 35th and

El Pollo Loco at the corner of High Street.

The city is moving forward in the all-important street redesign project. Councilmember Spees' office has assured L-CAP of funding, and we are hopeful that additional funding will be forthcoming from Henry Chang's discretionary fund.

Even with all the positive signs of change, we need to be vigilant about the continuing problems of blight, vacancies, and still inadequate variety and quality of businesses to serve our community. If you want to make a difference in your community, come to our next L-CAP meeting, on December 8, 7 to 9 p.m., at the World Ground Café. ♦



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STARS & GRIPES

BY STELLA LAMB

To submit your star or gripe, call 531-0972 and leave details and your name and phone number.

★ Stars to Ed Garcia, Chair of the Bret Harte Merchants Association. To beautify the Boulevard, he got help from the city to create a handsome new storefront for his business, Purofirst, at 3860 MacArthur Blvd.

★ Stars to Stuart Richardson's third-grade class at Fruitvale Elementary School for the lovely flower garden with bird houses along School Street at Boston.

★ Stars to Kaye Stewart for all of her hard work and accomplishments during her 1998/99 term as the Chair of the Laurel NCPC.

★ Stars to Niccolo DeLuca for his wonderful efficiency as Dick Spees' assistant.

★ Stars to Yvonne Long for her dedication to the Allendale District long after she left the neighborhood.

★ Stars to the volunteers who helped plant approximately 200 trees in the Laurel District east of MacArthur, primarily between High Street and 35th Avenue.

★ Stars to Officer John O' Reilly for the enormous drug bust—keep up the good work!

☛ Gripes to the people who vandalized a city sign and broke a tree on Masterson. ♦

Laurel Jazz

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Their outstanding artists, trumpets Ambrose Akinmusire and Jonathan Finlayson, pianist Colin Hogan, and drummer Valentino Pellizzer-Salgado, were glad of a venue for their talents. Bevan Manson, Director of Jazz at UC Berkeley, arranged for the Jonah Minton UC Jazz Sextet to perform. Curtis Buckley, a leader of the Laurel/Redwood Heights Neighborhood Council, had heard bass guitar Vicki Grossi of "Blue and Tan" perform at World Ground Café one Sunday and brought her on board. Haybert Houston obtained the participation of cellist Marcie Brown, also happy to help the school.

With the talent lined up, Stella Lamb and five others, now named Friends of the Laurel School, set to work to make the event happen. Katie Babcock and Gerry Goeres worked on publicity, posters, and T-shirts. Renee Jackson, Laurel School parent, worked as liaison with the school. Stella and Scott Lamb mounted a citywide publicity campaign. Top-notch Festival music filled the Laurel School auditorium from 2 to 6 p.m. on October 23. \$2,000 was raised toward the goal of \$30,000 for the new play equipment. Don't feel bad if you missed it. You may still send a check payable to the Laurel School P.T.A. with a designation for playground equipment, or leave your contribution at World Ground Café, attention Friends of the Laurel School, c/o Stella Lamb.

"This was just the beginning," Stella says. "We intend to do this next year with more musicians and more publicity." ♦

New Parent

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

to work, the karmic wheel has come back to bite him by giving him a recurring dream that it is 6:30 a.m. (when he normally rises for work). Now he frequently awakes at 1 a.m., thinking it's time to rise. As for me, I have spurts in between those in-the-still-of-the-night feedings where I am so tired I literally cannot get back to sleep. Some four months into this baby-rearing adventure, Brian and I are beginning to realize what most parents already know: we'll be short on sleep for years to come.

That's not to say having a baby is not worth this constant state of zombiehood. Dog-tired though we may be, we are blessed with an amazingly sweet son. Very early on, this kid figured out the law of natural selection: he knew he had better do something darling to endear himself to us rather quickly so that we would continue to serve him with slavish devotion. He began smiling and cooing just weeks after birth. He can be annoyingly perky and cute at 5 a.m. Now Brian and I spare ourselves no humiliation, public or private, if we can merely elicit a giggle from his sweet lips.

Before my son was born, I wondered how I would deal with the exhaustion, the endless diapers and drool. But what I've learned is this: you don't dwell on those things. Yes, the diaper pail stinks, and I'll be sporting wash-and-wear clothes for many moons. My back aches from carrying my precious cargo, but I don't care. I pick him up all the more. Maybe for me, the sleep deprivation has a numbing effect, dulling all my pain-eliciting nerve endings and helping me to focus on how truly amazing my boy is.

I have taken six months off from work to be with my son

continued on page 5



Paulette Avery, R.N., M.S.N.

To Your Health

Walking for Health

If trips to the gym, running around a track, or thirty minutes on a home exercise machine don't excite you, here's good news. Walking, plain old walking, may be the best exercise there is. Since getting exercise helps keep our hearts healthy, our weight in the proper range, and our bones strong, isn't it nice to know we can do all of that by simply walking regularly?

It makes sense if you think about it, as the November issue of *Harvard Women's Health Watch* notes. But only in the last decade or so, and in studies involving women, have results indicated that walking has many benefits. And since it requires no special equipment (except some good shoes) and no training or skill, some consider it the ideal exercise.

Studies indicate many benefits from walking. One is a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease. Results from the Nurses' Health Study found that three hours a week of brisk walking brought health benefits equivalent to getting 15 to 20 minutes a day of vigorous exercise. Women who walked or did more vigorous exercise had a 30 to 40 percent lower incidence of heart attacks when compared with sedentary women. Additionally, walking benefits those who already have cardiovascular disease by lowering blood pressure, reducing cholesterol, boosting HDL (good cholesterol), and slowing the progression of atherosclerosis.

Walking helps to maintain bone density, contributes to weight loss, reduces the risk of diabetes, improves your mood, and reduces cancer risk.

How much walking you must do and at what speed depends on the benefits you wish to achieve. If your goal is to increase your bone density, the longer you spend on your feet the better. Pace is

not important. But if you want to lose weight, your success depends on both speed and duration. You should walk fast enough to keep your heart rate and breathing elevated; a leisurely stroll isn't going to do it. But you should still be able to carry on a conversation. According to the Nurses' Health Study, a pace of at least three miles per hour is necessary to achieve a 35 percent reduction in heart-attack risk.

If you are just beginning a walking program, check with your doctor first. Begin with just a few minutes a day, and increase the speed and duration of your walks as your stamina increases. Wear shoes made for walking that provide the support and cushioning needed to protect your joints. Synthetic socks do a better job of absorbing perspiration and preventing friction than cotton socks. Walking with a partner may provide the commitment you need to walk regularly. I enjoy the companionship of a walking partner and find I walk further because our conversation makes the time pass more quickly than when I walk alone. If you don't have a partner, listening to a tape or the radio on a Walkman can also be helpful. And don't forget the importance of staying adequately hydrated. Drink water before, after, and, if possible, during your walk.

You may find you like to walk the same route every time or, if you are like me, may want to vary your path. I like to explore different parts of our neighborhood and vary the intensity of my walks. When I'm feeling ambitious, I choose a route with steeper hills. On low-energy days, I prefer a more level area to walk. But wherever you walk in the coming weeks, may you find peace and joy this holiday season. ♦

Paulette Avery is a registered nurse and a freelance writer who specializes in health issues.

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Piano Lessons: 25 years experience with children and adults. After many years in Rockridge, my studio is now located in Redwood Heights. Call for information or an interview-lesson. Andrea Simms, 336-1556.

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Allendale Dedicates New Tot Lot

BY DENISE MAULDIN

On a sunny October 30, a group of child and adult Allendale neighbors gathered to celebrate the completion of the new tot lot at the Allendale Recreation Center. Speakers at the dedication ceremony included Councilmember Dick Spees, Interim Director of Oakland Parks and Recreation Antonio Acosta, Center Director Terry Gammage, Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Anne Woodell, Janet Hansen, Project Manager with Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation, and Allendale Recreation Center Advisory Board Chairperson Denise Mauldin.

The new play equipment was funded by the citizens of Oakland through Measure I and is part of \$3 million worth of playground improvements at 35 Oakland



District 4 Councilmember Dick Spees celebrates the opening of Allendale's new children's play area and suggests the neighborhood plan for the future.

sites. The Allendale tot-lot renovations include a sand-and-water play area, composite play structure with curly climber, slides, transfer platform and seat, and a two-bay swing set with two tot seats and two belt seats, as well as

a turf area and new synthetic safety surface and concrete walks that make the play areas and events accessible to everyone.

After the speeches and ribbon cutting, recreation center neighbors and advisory board members, at Dick Spees' suggestion, discussed future improvements at the site with Mr. Spees and Mr. Acosta. Mr. Spees noted the lack of recreation facilities, particularly in the Laurel area, and offered to work with the neighbors, advisory board, and the Department of Parks and Recreation to help find funding to remodel and/or expand the nearly 50-year-old recreation center building. Any Laurel or Allendale residents (or friends) interested in helping prepare plans and a cost analysis for this redesign/expansion project can contact Center Director Terry Gammage at 535-5635. ♦

New Parent

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

in his earliest days. And as my stint as a stay-at-home mom is drawing to a close, I realize I would not trade the exhaustion for anything. To stroll with Will through the Mills College campus on a warm autumn day and see his delight at a Monarch butterfly, to run into (not literally, even

in my sleep-deprived state) my pal Dal Sellman on MacArthur Blvd. and listen to him sing the praises of my boy, to catch Will's amazement over the color of radishes at the House of Produce, to soak up the genuine good will that has come our way from friends and strangers alike who simply love babies (especially mine, it seems) is worth all the "sweet, buttery sleep" in the world. ♦

Landlord

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

know that action as a united community gets more attention than individual actions. We know that in court, evidence is needed—police reports, pictures, damage estimates, etc. We know that our neighborhood solved a substantial problem, and others can do the same." ♦

Classified Rates

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Calendar of Community Events

BY SANDY JAEGER, COORDINATOR

To have your event listed, please contact Sandy Jaeger no later than the 12th of the preceding month at sandyjaeger@hotmail.com or 642-9537.

December 1999

Snapdragon Puppets: Friday, December 3, 3:30 p.m., "The Mousecracker," a delightful puppet version of Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite," performed by Roger Mara and the Snapdragon Puppets, César Chávez Branch library, 1900 Fruitvale Ave. Free admission. Call 238-3615 for more information.

Holy Names College Chamber Singers: Friday, December 3, 8 p.m., "Star in the East," responses to the Christmas story from medieval to modern times, Holy Names College Regents Theater, 3500 Mountain Blvd. \$6 general, \$4 students and seniors. Call 559-8535 for information.

A Tale of Two Brothers: Friday, December 3, 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, December 4, 7:30 p.m., presented by First Covenant Church 4000 Redwood Rd. Tickets \$6 for adults, \$3 for children. General seating. Call 531-5244.

Holy Names College Orchestra Concert: Sunday, December 5, 3 p.m., Holy Names College Regents Theater, 3500 Mountain Blvd. \$6 general, \$4 students and seniors. Call 559-8535 for information.

Mills College Contemporary Performance Ensemble: Tuesday, December 7, 8 p.m., Mills College Concert Hall, 5000 MacArthur Blvd. Works by Pauline Oliveros, Fred Firth, Anne LeBaron, Cornelius Cardew, and Karlheinz Stockhausen. Free admission. Call 430-2296 for more information.

Laurel Community Action Project: Wednesday, December 8, 7 to 9 p.m., World Ground Café.

Dimond Improvement Association: Wednesday, December 8, 7:30 to 9 p.m., Dimond Library, 3565 Fruitvale Ave. Contact Janet Broughton, 532-1645.

Allendale NCPC: Wednesday, December 8, 7:30 p.m., Allendale School. General meeting. Call Donna Blank at 535-0908 for information.

Laurel/Redwood Heights NCPC (beat 25X): Thursday, December 9, 7 to 9 p.m., Laurel School, 3750 Brown Street. Annual holiday celebration potluck. Contact Luqman, 482-8560.

American Beauty: Sunday, December 12, 3 p.m., Holy Names College Studio Theater, 3500 Mountain Blvd. Handel cantatas, Charles Ives hymns, world premiere of Sonata Rondo by Robert K. Greenlee. \$12 general, \$8 students and seniors. Call 653-8420 for information.

Laurel Chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons: Tuesday, December 14, 10:30 a.m., Fruitvale Presbyterian Church, 2735 MacArthur Blvd. New members welcome.

Friends of Sausal Creek: Wednesday, December 15, 7 to 9 p.m., Dimond Library, 3565 Fruitvale Ave. New members welcome. Call 231-9566 for information.

Redwood Day School Winter Concert: Thursday, December 16, 7 p.m., The Mormon Temple. A free multicultural concert for all. Call Ann Utterman, 531-5584, for more information.

Poetry in the Java Spotlight: Thursday, December 16, 7:30 p.m., World Ground Café. Open reading follows.

Friends of Sausal Creek Workday: Saturday, December 18, 9 a.m. to noon, Dimond Park, 3860 Hanly Rd. Children under 15 need adult accompaniment. Call 231-9566 for information.

Bret Harte/Joaquin Miller NCPC (beat 22Y): Tuesday, December 21, Bret Harte Middle School, 3700 Coolidge Ave. Contact Luqman, 482-8560, for time.

Kwanzaa Celebration: Monday, December 27, 5:30 p.m., Eastmont Town Center, 7200 Bancroft Ave., Suite 211. Janelle Coleman and Company perform a dramatic presentation of Sojourner Truth and talk about the principles of Kwanzaa. Sponsored by the Friends of the Oakland Public Library. All are welcome. Contact the Eastmont Branch Library, 615-5726, for more information.

January 2000

Friends of César E. Chávez Library: Wednesday, January 5, 6:30 p.m., 1900 Fruitvale Ave. Call 535-5620 for information.

Dimond Improvement Association: Wednesday, January 5, 7:30 to 9 p.m., Dimond Library, 3565 Fruitvale Ave. Contact Ann Nomura, 530-7759.

Laurel Chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons: Tuesday, January 11, 10:30 a.m., Fruitvale Presbyterian Church, 2735 MacArthur Blvd. New members welcome.

Maxwell Park NCPC: Wednesday, January 12, 7 p.m., Mills Grove Christian Church, 5410 Fleming Street. Contact Jose Dorado, 535-0577.



Marge
Laverty

Leona Heights Garden Club Tip of the Month

Our last garden-tips article for 1999—imagine! We wonder what new plants and ideas will develop in 2000 and what the weather will be.

Poinsettias

This Christmas plant is now in its second century in the U.S., having been brought here from Mexico in 1825 by the first U.S. ambassador, Joel Roberts Poinsett. Today many colors, sizes, and shapes of poinsettias are available. Eighty-five percent of flowering plants purchased during the Christmas season are poinsettias, 77 percent being red. The actual flowers of the poinsettia plant are the golden yellow clusters (cyathias) in the center of the colored bracts, plant's leaves that change color to attract insects to assure pollination.

The following tips will help

you select a plant that will last throughout the holiday season:

- (1) Choose one that is not wilted.
- (2) Avoid plants with foliage that is beginning to yellow.
- (3) Do not fertilize now.
- (4) Make sure the plant you choose still has an abundance of not fully opened cyathias.
- (5) If the plant has had plastic or paper sleeving around it for a long time, the green leaves may turn yellow and drop before the holidays are over.

Locate your plant in a spot with bright, natural light but not exposed to direct sunlight for more than one to two hours a day. If in a sunny location, make sure the plant never dries out. If your plant has a foil wrapper, pierce the bottom to allow proper drainage and place the plant in a waterproof container to catch seepage. Keep your plant away from drafts and heat from appliances, radiators and ventilation ducts.

Some poinsettias can last indoors throughout the year or can be planted outside.

Research shows that poinsettias should not be considered poisonous, but if eaten by children or animals they could cause discomfort. Some, however, still believe that ingestion of the plant is harmful (see *Over The Hedge* magazine, Nov/Dec 1999).

Care of a Living Christmas Tree

Living Christmas trees can be kept indoors for a short period

of time. After the holidays, you have something to plant in your landscape. Among the varieties of living Christmas trees, a favorite is the Colorado blue spruce. It gives a neat layered look and makes a nice landscape tree for planting later. Keep away from heat sources like televisions and fireplaces, heaters and the like. You can put electric lights on your tree. While checking the lights for worn or frayed cords, make sure they don't emit too much heat. The new miniature lights are fairly cool. Turn lights off when you leave the house and before retiring. Never let water level be depleted on live trees. The root ball must stay moist.

Some Seasonal Things to Do

Plant shrubs and trees now. The soil is still warm enough for good root growth, and the winter rains will stimulate root growth for stronger, healthier top growth in spring.

Feed shrubs and trees that will bloom in January and February. If azalea and gardenia foliage is light or yellowish green, water with solution of chelated iron. Prune deciduous fruit trees now, following up with a dormant spray.

Have a happy and safe Holiday Season! ♦

Laurel/Redwood Heights NCPC (beat 25X): Thursday, January 13, 7 to 9 p.m., Laurel School, 3750 Brown Street. Contact Luqman, 482-8560.

Friends of Sausal Creek Workday: Saturday, January 15, 9 a.m. to noon, Dimond Park, 3860 Hanly Rd. Planting and maintenance continue at the Sausal Creek restoration site. Children under 15 need adult accompaniment. Call 231-9566 for information.

MasterGuild Series: Program 2—Quartets: Sunday, January 16, 7 p.m., Holy Names College Regents' Theater, 3500 Mountain Blvd. \$15 general, \$10 seniors, \$5 students. Call 559-8535 for more information.

Friends of Sausal Creek: Wednesday, January 19, 7 to 9 p.m., Dimond Library, 3565 Fruitvale Ave. Plan 1999 restoration and planting projects. Call 231-9566 for information.

Redwood Heights Improvement Association: Wednesday, January 19, 7:30 p.m., Redwood Heights Recreation Center, 3883 Aliso Street. Contact Richard Cowan, 482-3471.

Poetry in the Java Spotlight: Thursday, January 20, 7:30 p.m., World Ground Café. Open reading follows.

East Bay Habitat for Humanity Open House: Saturday, January 22, 10 a.m., 370 105th Ave. Affordable housing available through the Habitat's homeownership program. Join them at the open house or call 251-6304 for info.

Holy Names College Faculty Concert: Saturday, January 22, 8 p.m., Holy Names College Regents' Theater, 3500 Mountain Blvd. Schwungvoll presents "California Champaign." \$12 general, \$8 seniors, \$6 students. Call 559-8535 for more information.

Hotels/motels along MacArthur: sponsored by Traci McKnight, O.P.D. Wednesday, January 26, 6:00 p.m., Fruitvale Presbyterian Church, 2735 MacArthur Blvd. Call 535-5687 for information.

Ongoing

Arts and Crafts and Theater Workshops for Children: Saturdays, 3 to 5 p.m., World Ground Café. 3 to 4 p.m. for 5- to 8-year-olds, 4 to 5 p.m. for 9- to 12-year-olds; sponsored by the Mills College Outreach program. Arts and crafts and theater on alternate weeks. Call 482-2933 for information and reservations (a must).

Dunsmuir House and Gardens: Tuesdays-Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 2960 Peralta Oaks Ct. Gardens open to the public. Christmas at Dunsmuir celebration, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays December 4 to 6, 11 to 13, and 18 to 20. Call 615-5555 for information. ♦

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Bret Harte Alternative Program Opens

BY GORDON LAVERTY

Bret Harte Middle School's principal, Mary Hamadeh, announced her satisfaction at the opening of the Alternative School Program at an October 21 press conference at the Fruitvale Presbyterian Church, home of the new endeavor. Caroline Anderson, a former Bret Harte teacher, leads the program designed to reinforce math, English, history, and reading skills.

At the press conference, the Reverend Mark Newton, Fruitvale Church pastor, said "We care about the children in the community. A day lost in a child's education is a day lost forever." Jose Padilla spoke for the students, saying, "I am happy to be in the program because Ms. Anderson is a good teacher."

Community organizations pulling together to implement the program include the Oakland School



Bret Harte Alternative School Program teacher Carolyn Anderson is shown with four students at the school opening.

Department, Oakland Coalition of Congregations, and Bret Harte/Joaquin Miller Crime Prevention Council. Healthy Start funding matched by the Oakland School District can support 20 students in the program. Program Coordinator Elaine Lyford-Nojima expressed great confidence. "This program is geared to produce results for which we, with the families, have

high hopes," she stated.

"Bret Harte is a strong model school due to parental involvement," said School Board District 4 representative, Jean Quan. Pastor Chris Shiber, Montclair United Methodist Church, indicated strong support for the program.

The program operates four days a week and will involve access to modern technology. ♦

D.I.A. News

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

business look attractive and welcoming, others are encouraged to open shops nearby. Mr. Chang has persuaded landlords of empty stores to allow artists and other merchants to erect advertising displays in the empty shop windows. Lighting up and decorating seem to be an inexpensive way to attract new businesses.

On surveillance cameras, Mr. Chang feels that private enterprises should be allowed to use them but that government usage should be controlled.

"I try to build bridges between districts," stated Mr. Change when asked what a councilmember-at-large does. He also reminded us of the importance of promoting more business with Pacific Rim countries. He sees expanding trade as providing job opportunities for Oakland. He wants to put Oakland on the map with research on the panda. Maybe there will be a new panda couple at the Oakland Zoo!

Finally, on education in Oakland, Mr. Chang believes there should be more safe places for kids to be after school in addition to more homework centers. The schools should be given a chance to continue the changes that they have started. If progress fails to be made after a reasonable amount of time, then different tactics could be taken.

Our next meeting will be a board meeting on December 1. If you have a question or concern, please contact our Web site at www.dimondnews.org. ♦

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A Farewell to Rest: Confessions of a New Parent

BY ELLEN GRIFFIN

Close your eyes, close your eyes, go to sleep now, my darling. There's a sandman golden-white, bringing happy dreams to you. Settle down, go to sleep, through the quiet night rest. You are safe in my arms, in my arms holding fast. Now the moon, riding high, turns the shadows to silver, and the night beams, with a sigh, whisper soft across the hills. It's a bright, enchanted land, where the unicorn dances, 'till the stars disappear, and the whole world is day. (Close Your Eyes, words by William Engvick; music by Johannes Brahms)

Notice a running theme through baby ballads? There is a reason that new parents through the ages have been concerned, nay, obsessed, with getting their babies to

sleep. Before my son Will was born last August, wise, informed people (all parents themselves) warned me about resting up. And I took their advice and grabbed some extra winks. But my husband Brian and I had no idea just how exhausting a newborn baby can be. Sleep deprivation is the constant thread linking all our shaky thoughts and exhausted actions.

So when Metro Editor Toni Locke called to ask me to submit an essay on parenthood, I wondered how I could possibly oblige. Lack of sleep has taken from me even the basic ability to spell, let alone come up with something new on this topic. It has also robbed me of what little judgment I have, and in a very confused and weak

moment, I agreed. So here I sit on the day my copy is due, my baby napping for who-knows-how-long? And instead of catching 40 winks, I am hammering out copy that will no doubt need quite a bit of help from the Metro's crack team of editors (thanks in advance, ladies). What else can I focus on but sleep? Or, as Brian calls it, "sweet, buttery sleep."

For baby Will's first month, Brian and I were lucky to have friends, family, and even hired help come over so we could catch some shut-eye. And the devious Brian had another trick that he kept threatening to deploy: go to the store for diapers and then sleep in the car in the parking lot. Whether or not he actually did this has never been confirmed. But now that he's back

continued on page 4



Ellen and Will shopping in the Laurel.

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